

Community Eligibility Provision



Montana
Office of Public Instruction
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Community Eligibility Provision (CEP) is a non-pricing meal option that benefits schools and students by improving student access to nutritious meals while reducing administrative requirements to qualify meal applications.

Identified Student Percentage (ISP) Calculation

$$\text{Identified Student \%} = \frac{\text{\# of Identified Students Directly Certified}}{\text{Total \# of enrolled students}} \times 100$$

Schools can be eligible to participate in CEP individually, in a group, or district-wide. When combined, the ISP is calculated using the identified student and enrollment totals for all schools in the group.

Reimbursement Rates

The ISP for a school or group of schools is multiplied by a factor of 1.6 to determine meal reimbursement rates.

Example: A school has a 48% ISP Rate $\times 1.6 = 76.80\%$

This means that 76.8% of meals served are reimbursed at the Federal free rate and the other 23.2% of meals are reimbursed at the Federal paid rate. CEP does not reimburse for the Federal reduced-price rate.

Schools with an ISP equal to or greater than 62.5% (before applying the 1.6 multiplication factor) will receive 100% of meals at the Federal free rate. The claiming percentage established for a school or group of schools is applied for a period of four school years and may be increased each year if Identified Student Percentages rise.

Direct Certification Eligibility Sources

SNAP
TANF
FDPIR
Homeless
Migrant
Runaway
Head Start
Foster
Extended Eligibility*
-SNAP, TANF & FDPIR only



CEP Eligibility

CEP eligibility is based on the percentage of identified students who are enrolled.

Schools, groups of schools or school districts must have an Identified Student Percentage (ISP) of at least 40% as of April 1st of the school year prior to implementing CEP.

Directly Certified

Students eligible for free meal benefits based on documentation obtained directly from the appropriate State or local agency.

Identified Students

Identified students are low income children who are **directly certified** for free school meals without the use of a household application.

Accurate ISP Counts

Ensure that all eligibility sources of students directly certified are included in the Identified Student Percent (ISP) counts in order to maximize reimbursement.

⇒ See the following page for information



Maximize Direct Certification Counts in DCA

ISP data is captured each year on April 1 in the Direct Certification Application (DCA) system.

1. Potential Matches in DCA

The DCA system automatically matches SNAP/TANF children with student enrollment information. Match scores that are not exact require school review to determine if the student is one in the same person. Periodically check your district's Potential Match list and link students to improve ISP.

2. Manually Directly Certify Students in DCA

SNAP/TANF are the only *automatic* sources of data matching within DCA.

Manual direct certification can be completed for the following eligibility sources:

- FDPIR, Homeless, Migrant, Runaway, Head Start, & Foster
- Extended Eligibility - if any child within a household is directly certified through SNAP, TANF or FDPIR, the eligibility is extended to all students in the household.

Documentation of direct certification must be confirmed through the appropriate source records.

Important CEP Dates

April 1 st	Schools Identified Student Percent (ISP) school snapshots taken from DCA to determine CEP qualifications. <i>OPI will mail school's ISP proxy counts taken on April 1 to schools above 30%.</i>
April 15 th	Deadline to report ISPs above 30% or correct OPI's proxy counts.
August 31 st	CEP Intent to Participate and Addendum forms due to OPI.

Reporting the Identified Student Percentage (ISP)

Identified Student Percentage (ISP) calculations must be established using the number of directly certified students and the number of enrolled students as of April 1st. The OPI utilizes direct certification data from the DCA system to provide districts with their school(s) ISP calculations. This data serves as a proxy for actual eligibility and may not include all sources of students directly certified in a school's Identified Student Percent (ISP). Districts have until April 15th to report corrections to proxy data. Corrections resulting in a school having over a 30% ISP as well as those above 40% with an increased ISP should be reported to OPI. Participating CEP Schools with a higher ISP rate than previously determined may establish a new ISP and higher reimbursement rate the next four years.

CEP School or District Grouping

The 40% minimum ISP threshold may be determined by an individual school, a group or multiple groups of schools within a district as well as district-wide. This allows some schools to participate that are below the 40% threshold, as long as the aggregate of the group of schools meets the threshold. The ISP for a group of schools is calculated by taking the sum of the identified students for the entire group of schools divided by the sum of the total student enrollment for the entire group of schools. Districts may group schools to maximize their ISP to determine the highest claiming percentage. Regrouping schools already participating in CEP will begin a new 4-year claiming period for elected schools.

Please contact OPI, School Nutrition Programs at (406) 444-4413 or (406) 444-2501 for questions.